



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Cottonwood Grazing Allotment (No. 11414)
Grazing Permit Renewal
WY-090-EA12-61

1. Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (WY-090-EA12-61) for a proposed action to address livestock grazing permit renewal in the Cottonwood Allotment (No. 11414) located in Uinta County. The project would renew the current livestock grazing permittees' permits for a term of ten years under the guidelines described in the preferred alternative (Alternative 1) analyzed in the environmental assessment (EA) referred to above.

Alternative 1 would renew current grazing permits for a period of ten years with the same terms and conditions as the current permits. For further information please see the full description of Alternative 1 in Chapter 2 of the EA.

2. Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described. In addition, no environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (RMP), Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and Record of Decision (ROD), signed May, 2010. For these reasons, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

2.1 Context

The action would occur on federal lands within the Cottonwood Allotment (No. 11414) (amounting to 55.8% of the land within the allotment) and would have local impacts on the resources similar to and within the scope of those described and considered in the Kemmerer RMP, Final EIS, and ROD. The project is an allotment-specific action directly involving approximately 755 acres of BLM- administered land in a solid block adjacent to a 597-acre-block of private land. The federal land has no known international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

2.2 Intensity

The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

2.2.1 Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The action/alternatives would affect resources as described in the EA. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to the various resources were incorporated in the design of the action alternative. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the Kemmerer RMP, Final EIS, and ROD.

2.2.2 The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.

No aspect of the action/alternatives would have an effect on public health and safety.

2.2.3 Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, wetlands, mineral resources, recreation/travel opportunities and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

No known historic or cultural resources exist in the project area. No known wetlands or mineral resources exist on the federal lands. Wilderness Characteristics are not present in the area. The remaining components of the Human Environment and Resource Issues (air, soil and water resources as well as social and economic conditions) are discussed and analyzed in the EA.

2.2.4 The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The Cottonwood Allotment does not have a history of controversy surrounding it. Current grazing practices as outlined in the preferred alternative are not likely to have any effects to the human environment that are controversial.

2.2.5 The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

2.2.6 The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This project does not include any decisions that may be considered controversial or precedent-setting.

2.2.7 Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.

The environmental analysis did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the Kemmerer RMP/FEIS.

2.2.8 The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in, or eligible for, listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

A cultural resources survey was completed as part of the EA process, the results of which are discussed in Chapter 3 of the EA, specifically in Section 3.3. All reasonable precautions are included in Chapter 4, specifically in Section 4.3.

2.2.9 The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.

No endangered or threatened species, or their habitat, are known to exist within, or adjacent to, the Cottonwood Allotment.

2.2.10 Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

All alternatives analyzed for this action conform to the 2010 Kemmerer RMP and ROD (USDI, BLM, 2010) and, by extension, all of the statutes and regulations that guided the decisions made while writing that document. The following list includes the laws and regulations that were of particular relevance in creating this document:

- Taylor Grazing Act of 1934
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701)
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978
- Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (ESA)
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)
- 43 CFR § 4100 Grazing Administration-Exclusive of Alaska- authorizes BLM to issue grazing permits on identified allotments for periods of up to ten years under the guideline that “The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principle of multiple use and sustained yield.” The following portion of 43 CFR § 4100 deals specifically with issuing permits and monitoring rangeland health:
 - 43 CFR § 4130.2(a) which states, in part, “Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on public lands and other lands under the administration of the BLM that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans.”

The Fundamentals of Rangeland Health (43 CFR § 4180) and Wyoming’s Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health, address watersheds, ecological condition, water quality and habitat for special status species.



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